

RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF Monday, February 20, 2012 MEETING

Board Members Present: Mayor Scott Avedisian, Chairperson; Jerome Williams; Michael Lewis; Maureen Martin, Anna Liebenow; and Margaret Holland McDuff.

Absent: Thomas Deller and Stephen Durkee

Also Present: Charles Odingbe, Chief Executive Officer; Todd Gleason, (Outside Counsel); Ellen Mandly; and other members of RIPTA's staff and members of the public whose names are on the sign-in sheet.

Agenda Item 1: Vote on January 23, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Mayor Scott Avedisian called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and asked if the Board members had an opportunity to review the minutes of the meeting held on January 23, 2012 and the Board members indicated that they had. Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and the minutes of the meetings held January 23, 2012 unanimously approved.

Before moving on to public comment Mayor Avedisian commented that a settlement agreement had been reached between ATU and RIPTA and was signed on February 17th and was approved by Charles Odingbe and Paul Harrington. He personally thanked the union and Jerry Williams for all the work they did on this settlement agreement which he said will help in reducing our deficit for this year along with Charles and RIPTA staff. He said he appreciates everyone working together and hope this continues because we are all faced with a difficult financial situation this year and next. He said a good working relationship with our unions will be a key issue in helping resolve some of these issues.

The Mayor finished by saying that going forward the Board agenda will have an item each month whereby RIPTA's unions and community stakeholders will be allotted time to do a short presentation on items of interest to the Board, RIPTA employees and the community.

Agenda Item 2: Public Comment

Mayor Avedisian moved on to public and noted that comments will be taken but generally the Board does not respond, however they reserve the right to do so now or after the meeting.

The Mayor recognized Paul Harrington, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union. Mr. Harrington began by thanking the Mayor for the

sentiments expressed in his opening remarks and said he believes allowing for time for individual stakeholders to speak at future meetings is a great idea. Next Mr. Harrington remarked on the travel policy that will come before the Board later in the meeting and expressed concern that the policy did not set forth dollar amounts or limits and he wondered what the Authority has budgeted for employee travel. He feels this information should be included in the policy.

Joe Cole a RIPTA bus operator spoke next and thanked the CEO and the Board members, particularly Mr. Williams for their efforts in coming to a resolution with ATU. He commented that the Mayor has only been Board Chair one month and in that short time he is moving issues along and he believes this is due to the Mayor's experience with union negotiations and his good working relationship with labor.

Mr. Cole said he is still concerned about layoffs which will chip at the foundations of RIPTA because without a good foundation the top will crumble.

Agenda Item 3: Chief Executive Officer's Report

Agenda Item 6: Elmwood Avenue Bus Stop Improvements

Charles Odimgbe addressed the Board to give his CEO report and said the report would begin with Amy Pettine giving the Elmwood Bus Stop Improvements presentation and he would follow with a report on

some draft goals and objectives he has given to the Board and he will follow that up with next steps which he characterized as a daunting task.

Amy Pettine addressed the Board along with Greg Nordine a RIPTA Transit Planners to discuss the agenda item for Elmwood Avenue Bus Stop Improvements which is being conducted through a HUD community project grant. Ms. Pettine began elaborating on the PowerPoint presentation entitled Route 20 – Elmwood Avenue Bus Stop Improvements and said # 20 was chose because it is the biggest route in the system.

Ms. Pettine gave an overview of the big picture saying the bus stop inventory by planning staff is almost complete with nearly 4,700 of the 5,000 bus stops on 54 routes statewide having been surveyed. She said service and bus stop standards have been updated and described this process and the funding which is via a HUD community challenge grant. Next she discussed the project goals and beyond which covered frequency of service, bus signal priority, headway-based schedules, route layout, bus stops with real time info, shelters and branding of shelters and enhanced amenities. Ms. Pettine elaborated on the status of each of these as outlined in the PowerPoint.

Mr. Nordine discussed why the Elmwood route had been chosen and elaborated on the importance of the collaborative relationship with

RIDOT on this project. Mr. Nordine discussed expected improvements such as increased passenger amenities, fewer conflicts between bus stops and on street parking/increased bus stop visibility, new signage, and the potential for fewer, more thoughtfully spaced stops. He said most of the stops being considered for movement are rarely used and community meetings are being held to get feedback on the suggested moves and improvements.

Mr. Nordine noted that some of the benefits will be improved running times and on-time performance, reduced maintenance costs, improved crosswalks, safety and ADA compliance. He said RIPTA is leveraging additional monies beyond agency funds via partnerships with RIDOT and the City of Providence.

Staff answered questions from the Board members regarding fewer stops, larger shelters and the enhanced safety features and better ADA compliance. Maureen Martin asked staff to give Board members a hard copy of the PowerPoint presentation.

Next Charles Odimgbe said he wanted to discuss the document he distributed with his draft of the top five strategic goals for RIPTA. He described the process he used to develop the list with staff and drill it down to the top five goals which are: achieve fiscal health; deliver quality transit; build high quality employees; enhance RIPTA's image; and improve board oversight. Mr. Odimgbe read aloud the bulleted remarks associated with each of the five goals and elaborated on

them. The CEO said there is a sixth goal under consideration: mobility manager which would address RIPTA's role in rail, specialized transportation, ferry, bike, carpool and vanpools, special events, and human services transportation and becoming a one-stop maintenance facility, i.e. fix all RIDOT vehicles and expand to police and other such vehicles.

Mr. Odimbe expressed concern about the goal regarding financial health and RIPTA's major reliance on federal dollars. He reminded the Board that RIPTA is funded by approximately 21% federal funds and this is disturbing because we have no control over what happens at the federal level, but if anything should, we could find ourselves with 21% less funding in the budget. He thinks it's important to begin reviewing this issue and attempting to inoculate ourselves from the effect if this was to happen.

Mr. Odimbe said that RIPTA needs to do a better job of aligning ourselves with community stakeholders. He wants our stakeholders to feel included and proud to be working with us.

Mr. Odimbe said these issues will be for the Board to discuss and decide and he stressed that 'ownership' for each goal is open to suggestions. Mayor Avedisian said the goals put forth by the CEO would make good monthly discussion topics. Maureen Martin said the Board should particularly be involved in # 4, enhancing the RIPTA image. Margaret Holland McDuff opined that a good working

partnership between the Board, labor, and the community is important. Michael Lewis applauded this initiative by the CEO but said we need to be mindful of keeping a good balance between Board oversight and keeping the members knowledgeable, and not tipping too far into the daily responsibility running of the organization.

Agenda Item 4: Strategic Planning Committee Report

Maureen Martin, Acting Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee reported that the Committee had met on February 7th and the Core Connector was the main topic of discussion. She said Amy Pettine addressed the Committee to give an update on the Core Connector Study and to review report studies and to present a route, vehicle and finance plan. Ms. Pettine had reported to the full Board in January and she wanted to give the Committee a progress report and present the alternatives analysis in more detail. Ms. Pettine had hoped to receive approval from the Strategic Planning Committee to present the preferred analysis to the full Board to vote on today, as this is the next step under FTA guidelines. However, after a lengthy presentation by staff the issue of the preferred route came under debate and a number of members of the Committee were skeptical and said more discussion was needed before proceeding to determine if the core connector routes before the Committee were the right ones, and if the train station must be added during this phase.

Ms. Martin reported that at the end of the day the Committee decided

not to postpone taking a vote on the Core Connector. Michael Lewis interjected that they had good discussions, one on the TIGGER IV grant window and applying for a Core Connector study grant. He said it was the consensus of the Committee that we are not ready for that and in his opinion to do so at this time would commit to the program and obligate us to follow through if we receive the grant. He believes that with RIPTA's current fiscal issues it is difficult to commit at this point, without having further discussions on the topic. However he is not against moving forward with the Core Connector at a future date once it is determined what is in the best interest of the city and the state.

Amy Pettine reported that the Committee decided to meet again in March in order to give the Committee time to discuss the Core Connector further. She said Mike Lewis and Chris Kearns of the Governor's office are helping to get a meeting with the Governor's office on this issue and the CEO is meeting with Keith Stokes and others at Economic Development Corporation as well.

The Board members supported the actions of the Committee and staff and agreed that the issue required more discussion.

Agenda Item 5: RIPTA Travel Policy

Lilly Picchione addressed the Board to discuss the RIPTA Travel Policy and said that RIPTA has a series of policies and procedures governing employee conduct and these policies are approved by the

Board, which policies are developed by the relevant department and approved by the CEO. She said that staff is asking the Board to approve adding the statement that RIPTA “supports employee travel for the purposes of education, training, quality assurance, and information sharing. The agency will pay for reasonable and necessary business and travel expenses for RIPTA employees and officials.” She then gave a brief background of the process related to policies and procedures.

Mr. Lewis said it’s appropriate that the Board approve a travel policy as it is necessary to keep staff current on training, but we need good controls in place and an established budget. The CEO reminded the members that at the Board retreat he said he would soon begin to focus on better policy development and this travel policy reflects that and his commitment to elevate policy approval from the CEO to the Board level. Ms. Picchione then answered questions from the Board members on the policy relating to reimbursement procedures, budget, and department approval levels.

Following this discussion the Board asked that staff incorporate budgeted amounts and dollar approval levels into the policy. Jerry Williams asked for clarification on what the Board is being asked to approve, and Todd Gleason said its first line of the policy: RIPTA “supports employee travel for the purposes of education, training, quality assurance, and information sharing. The agency will pay for reasonable and necessary business and travel expenses for RIPTA

employees and officials” and he added “in accordance with RIPTA’s policies and procedures”. Mayor Avedisian asked that staff make the proposed clarifications. Mr. Lewis moved to approve the RIPTA Travel Policy as clarified and Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The policy was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 7: HR-1201 Insurance Broker Services

John Stanziale and Gary Primavera of Starkweather and Shepley addressed the Board to discuss Insurance Broker Services. Mr. Stanziale said staff is requesting the Board award a contract to Starkweather & Shepley of East Providence, RI to provide insurance broker services to the Authority. This is a one year contract with up to four annual renewals to be exercised at the sole discretion of the Authority. Mr. Stanziale read then discussed the cost of the services per year.

Following staff remarks Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the award of the Insurance Broker Services to Starkweather and Shepley as recommended by staff. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 8: HR 1203 Commercial Property Insurance Policy

John Stanziale the addressed the Board to discuss the Commercial Property Insurance Policy and said staff is requesting the Authority

purchase commercial property insurance from Chubb Insurance Company for \$131,843. Mr. Stanziale said this is a blanket policy which provides property coverage for all of RIPTA's buildings, contents, stock, computer equipment, etc, against fire, water damage, vandalism and the like.

Following staff remarks Ms. Margin made a motion to approve the award of the Commercial Policy Insurance to Chubb Insurance Company in the amount of \$131,843 and Mr. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 9: HR-1204 Independent Insurance Adjuster & Appraisal Services

John Stanziale and Vincent Pellegrino of Vincent Pellegrino Insurance Adjusters addressed the Board to discuss the Independent Insurance Adjuster & Appraisal Services contract award to Vincent Pellegrino Insurance Adjusters of Providence, RI to provide independent insurance adjuster services to the Authority. This is a one year contract with up to four annual renewals to be exercised at the sole discretion of the Authority. Mr. Stanziale read then discussed the cost of the services per year at an annual estimated cost of approximately \$40,000.

Following remarks by Mr. Stanziale relative to this award Ms. Holland McDuff moved that the contract for Independent Insurance Adjuster &

Appraisal Services be awarded to Vincent Pellegrino Insurance Adjusters at a yearly cost of approximately \$40,000. Ms. Martin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 10: Executive Session Pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) for Discussions and/or Action Related to Collective Bargaining

Mayor Avedisian asked for a motion to convene to executive session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) for Discussions and/or Action related to Collective Bargaining and Mr. Lewis made the motion. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. The motion to adjourn to executive session passed unanimously.

Following the Board's return to open session Mr. Williams made a motion to seal the minutes of the executive session. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 13: Adjournment

Margaret Holland McDuff made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michael Lewis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Recording Secretary